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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/CACEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: THE GRINCH CHANGES HIS MIND: U.S. EMBASSY'S HUMAN RIGHTS
DAY BACK ON IN TAJIKISTAN

1. (SBU) After the close of business on December 9, Ismat Nasredinov, Post's MFA contact and Chief of the North America Desk, contacted PAS to inform that the previously canceled Human Rights roundtable discussion at Tajik Technical University, planned for December 12, was back on track (septel). Although Tajik Technical University's rector was originally keen on the Human Rights day discussion, and the MFA itself canceled the event the morning of December 9, Ismat's exact words sounded odd: "We finally convinced the rector to allow your lecture." (COMMENT: Whatever. So long as it works. END COMMENT.)

2. (SBU) Post sent a strongly worded diplomatic note (text in septel) to the MFA in response to their diplomatic note postponing (i.e., canceling) Monday's roundtable. PolOff met with Nasredinov late on December 9 to tell him informally that she was writing this year's Human Rights report. She suggested this current development would not reflect at all well in Tajikistan's evaluation.

3. (SBU) COMMENT. In Tajikistan, we are increasingly convinced that the grade-school lesson of how to react to playground bullies is pertinent: give them an inch and they'll continue to take ten miles. We further note that this decision to cancel the Embassy's Human Right's Day event was very likely made before/before the President returned from the OIC Extraordinary Summit in Mecca. We hand-delivered our diplomatic-note protest to the President's foreign policy adviser, rather than trust it to wend its way through normal channels, where it likely would have been deep-sixed, and believe that likely caused the reversal. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND

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